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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the most recent standards movement and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) framework for civics and government, this paper attempts to use the standards and framework to construct a synthesis model of civic education, to analyze the model through the perspectives of five civic education theorists, and to subject the model to a means-end test. The paper is divided into the following sections: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "National Standards for Civics and Government and the Civics Framework for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress"; (3) "The Model as Analyzed through the Perspective of R. Freeman Butts"; (4) "The Model as Analyzed through the Perspective of Amy Gutmann"; (5) "The Model as Analyzed through the Perspective of Toni Marie Massaro"; (6) "The Model as Analyzed through the Perspective of David Steiner"; (7) "The Model as Analyzed through the Perspective of Thomas Pangle"; (8) "The Model as Analyzed through an Ends-Means Test"; and (9) "Conclusion." (EH)

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Indiana University

Strict Scrutiny: An Analysis of National Standards on Civic Education Through the Perspectives of Contemporary Theorists

SO028964

By

Thomas S. Vontz

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Introduction

As an issue of public policy, education's ascent to near the top of the American political ladder should be viewed as a positive development.[1] Among other things, increased attention has attracted more people and different views to the educational debate, enlarged the effort to define the goals of education or any of its disciplines, and raised the standards of performance in American classrooms. While it is far too early to generalize about the results of such efforts, there is cause for guarded optimism--if the quality of education is in any way proportional to the nation's interest in education. The last decade and a half of the 20th century will be characterized in educational history as an age of increased attention to education and its reform and corresponding calls for higher standards.

The standards movement attempts to raise the performance level of students, teachers, and schools. At the same time, national standards focus and guide curriculum development in various subjects and disciplines. As local school districts form committees to examine and reform various parts of the curriculum, committee members often refer to such national statements for local guidance. Closely linked with the standards, in many subjects and disciplines, are the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests administered at varying intervals. The NAEP assessments provide opportunities for educators to take occasional "snapshots" of student competence in grades 4, 8, and 12. The NAEP frameworks that guide construction of the tests are also important guideposts for curriculum developers at the state and local levels.

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[1]During his 1997 Inauguration Speech, President Clinton identified education as one of the top priorities during his second term. His Inauguration Speech also alluded to the importance of citizenship and the role of education in preparing for citizenship. See William Jefferson Clinton, "Inauguration 1997," in The White House Briefing Room (http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/html/1997-01-20.html, 1997), 3.

What follows focuses on the most recent standards and NAEP framework for one subject area--civics and government. As national statements on civic education, both the standards and the framework potentially impact the direction of American democracy. Therefore, it is important to hold the National Standards for Civics and Government (NSCG)[2] and the Civics Framework for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)[3] to a high level of scrutiny. This paper attempts to use the standards and framework to construct a synthesis model of civic education;[4] to analyze the model through the perspectives of five civic education theorists; and, finally, to subject the model to a means-ends test employed by the author.

The 1994 National Standards for Civics and Government and the Civic Framework for the 1998 NAEP

Although designed for different purposes, the standards and the framework may be viewed as complimentary documents. In fact, the NAEP Civics Framework acknowledges the favorable reception of the standards and their usefulness in developing the framework.[5] Although there might be some value in identifying areas of disagreement between the two documents, they are similar enough to allow one to construct a conception of civic education based on those

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[2]Center for Civic Education, *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1994).

[3]National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Civics Framework for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

[4]Either document, by itself, represents a form of synthesis. Constructing national standards or building frameworks from which to design national tests, are, by their nature, efforts in synthesis. The process involved scores of people who entertain a variety of diverse opinions about civic education. While the process does not guarantee broad-based satisfaction, it clearly aids in furthering the cause of synthesis at least among people informed and concerned about the direction of a particular discipline. Both the framework and standards are similar enough to construct a model of civic education based on their similarities.

[5]NAEP, ix.

similarities. Perhaps more than anything else, the conception of civic education as represented by the two documents suggests that teachers, schools, and students emphasize the ideas that went into creating the American form of democracy; relate those ideas to the structure and function of governmental and non-governmental institutions; and explore the ways in which the ideas manifest themselves in governmental practice, in foreign affairs, and through responsible citizenship.

The model may be initially separated into three familiar educational components--civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills associated with citizenship, and dispositions related to responsible and humane citizenship. The documents produced by either project were fueled by five broad, substantive, and nearly identical questions.[6] These questions, and their answers, drive the civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and dispositions that the design encourages. Thus, the questions are core concepts around which both the standards and the framework were constructed. The following are the guiding questions for both projects:

1. What are civic life, politics, and government?
2. What are the foundations of the American political system?
3. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
4. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
5. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?[7]

The questions focus on the ideas that undergird governments generally and the American political system and Constitution specifically. Both models attempt to provide balance between the sometimes conflicting ideas that went into creating, and continue to maintain, the system. For

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[6]The guiding questions for the standards are slightly different depending on educational level. See, for example, the K-4 Content Standards, Center for Civic Education, 13-14. However, the guiding questions for grades 5-8 and 9-12 are identical to those found in the NAEP framework.

[7]Center for Civic Education, 13-14; NAEP, 18.

example, there appears to be an effort to balance liberalism and republicanism, diversity and unity, political conflict and cooperation, and individual rights and collective responsibilities. To this end, both models represent attempts to emphasize and provide a balanced treatment of the ideas that are fundamental to American democracy.

The standards and the framework further develop key ideas and concepts by suggesting that students examine the ways in which key ideas are related to the structure, function, and authority of governmental institutions; for example, simply knowing that the Constitution establishes a federal system of government is not enough. Both models ask students to analyze how a federal system of government is consistent with the fundamental concepts and ideas that undergird the system.[8] Further, students are called on to examine the organization and power of the local, state, and national government; the place of law in American society; and judicial protection of individual rights.[9] Again, the focus is on the ideas and concepts that helped to construct, and continue to shape, the system.

To help develop important ideas, both models propose that civic education be approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective. In fact, both documents call attention to the various disciplines helpful in preparing for citizenship and the various contexts in which one's civic education takes place.[10] The selected content presupposes that civics and government is a multi-disciplinary subject that utilizes the tools and knowledge of several disciplines. History is used, for example, to both contextualize important ideas and issues as well as a way to demonstrate the

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[8]Center for Civic Education, 110-111; NAEP 42-49.

[9]Center for Civic Education, 110-117; NAEP, 42-49.

[10]Center for Civic Education, 2; NAEP, 33-34.

relationship of those ideas to practice.[11] A properly conceived civic education, from the perspective of either model, must also draw heavily on political science, economics, and law.[12]

As a key element, particularly of the NAEP framework, it is important to note that neither model focuses entirely on political or governmental institutions. Students also examine the ways in which the American political system is influenced through civil society.[13] Again, the idea of civil society and its importance to democratic institutions is not developed in isolation. Civil society is related to the development of important democratic ideas. For example, the model solicits an understanding of the ways in which civil society contributes to the idea of limited government, or is one of the essential characteristics of civic life.[14]

Another key element existent in both frameworks encourages the exploration and analysis of the various ways the United States interacts with other countries of the world. Students are asked not only to understand the international political organization, but also to relate foreign policy concepts and issues to the ideas and principles that undergird the American system. For example, both documents ask students to defend a foreign policy issue according to national interests, values, and principles.[15] It is worth noting that emphasis is not on comparing governments (although both the standards and the framework do call for some comparisons), but on how the

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[11]Both models employ key historical documents throughout American history to develop or emphasize main points and ideas. Key documents such as the *Federalist Papers*, the Declaration of Independence, the Magna Carta, Martin Luther King's *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, and others are used to develop important ideas and dispositions. See, for example, Center for Civic Education, 99-100; NAEP, 42-49.

[12]Center For Civic Education, 2.

[13]Center for Civic Education, 117-120; NAEP, 42-49.

[14]NAEP, 46-47.

[15]Center for Civic Education, 123; NAEP, 48.

United States interacts with and influences other countries.

Students not only explore the relationship of the United States and the rest of the world, they also investigate their own relationship to the American political system and civic life through citizenship. The model petitions students to examine the scope and limit of personal, political, and economic rights as well as personal and civic responsibilities.[16] Students also explore the various ways in which they can take part in civic life and identify the dispositions or traits most important for not only the maintenance but also the improvement of American constitutional democracy.[17]

Through the development of the ideas, concepts, and principles outlined above, students are encouraged to develop intellectual and participatory skills associated with responsible and humane citizenship. The NAEP framework categorizes the intellectual or thinking skills in three broad categories: (1) identifying and describing; (2) explaining and analyzing; and, (3) evaluating, taking, and defending positions.[18] The skills required for effective civic participation are categorized as interacting, monitoring, and influencing.[19] The clear purpose of both the standards and the framework is to develop citizens capable of participating in American democracy. In particular, students are invited to hone their intellectual and participatory skills through the analysis and evaluation of public policy issues. In fact, beginning in grade 5, the standards consistently call for students to "evaluate, take, and defend" positions relating to various issues

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[16]Center for Civic Education, 127-137; NAEP, 23.

[17]Center for Civic Education, 132-137; NAEP, 42-49.

[18]NAEP, 24.

[19]NAEP, 28.

and concepts.

The model also attempts to develop civic dispositions or ". . .the traits of private and public character essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy."[20] The civic dispositions identified in the NAEP framework focus on: (1) becoming an independent member of society; (2) assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen; (3) respecting individual worth and human dignity; (4) participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner; and (5) promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.

The Model Analyzed through the Perspective of R. Freeman Butts

R. Freeman Butts, as a leading theorist and strong supporter of civic education, no doubt indirectly influenced both frameworks through persuasive scholarship and directly influenced the NSCG by serving on its National Advisory Committee. Although membership on an advisory committee does not ensure satisfaction, overall, Butts would be pleased by the synthesis framework. In the *Civic Mission*, Butts identifies a litmus test for the civic efficacy of social studies programs.[21] The test analyzes the degree to which the programs focus directly on political concepts that underlie American constitutionalism and help students make rationale and humane judgements concerning public policy issues.[22] As previously constructed, the synthesis aims directly at the political concepts or ideas underlying American constitutionalism and encourages

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[20]NAEP, 31.

[21]R. Freeman Butts, *The Civic Mission in Educational Reform: Perspectives for the Public and the Profession* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1989), 218.

[22]Butts, 218.

humane judgement on issues of public policy. Additionally, the synthesis avoids "stretching the scope" of civic education to include generic social concerns or personal activities (e.g., values clarification or family-related education) that also concerned Butts in the *Civic Mission*.[23]

The synthesis also focused on what Butts calls "civitas"--the substantive concepts and core principles underlying a democratic constitutional order.[24] It could be argued that civitas concepts and principles represent the organizing and key component of the synthesis model. On one hand, Butts would be pleased by emphasizing substantive concepts. After all, one of his strongest criticisms of current educational reform is that many reforms miss the substantive point and focus too much emphasis on process.[25] Or, even worse in Butts' opinion, many reforms do not emphasize the schools' civic mission--preparation for citizenship in American democracy. On the other hand, he would no doubt like to see increased attention on civility (a behavioral component that enables competent and committed participation in public affairs) and, in particular, civism (the virtues of good citizenship).

It is safe to assume that Butts' major disappointment with either the framework or the standards would be the lack of focus on the common political values that Americans share--the values that frame political debate. Not that either the framework or the standards are completely void of American political values; understanding common political values are explicit parts of both conceptions. However, values are not a clear focus for either the standards or the framework. Instead of beginning with five substantive questions relating to civitas, Butts might have preferred

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[23]Butts, 219.

[24]Butts, 28.

[25]See Butts, 1-45.

to organize a civic curriculum around his six pairs of sometimes conflicting common values that represent both political unity and cultural diversity in the American tradition.[26] The synthesis does not seem to go far enough in promoting the values associated with either social cohesion and community (e.g. justice, equality, rightful authority, civic participation, significant truth and personal obligation) or with those that promote pluralism and individuality (e.g. freedom, diversity, privacy, due process, property rights, and international human rights) that Butts believes critical to civic education. Butts, to the extent his own proposal emphasized values and the "moral imperative" for civic education, might have preferred a more consistent treatment and analysis of fundamental values.[27] While those values are present in the model, they are not emphasized to a degree that would make Butts comfortable.

The Model Analyzed through the Perspective of Amy Gutmann

Like Butts, political scientist Amy Gutmann would be relatively satisfied with the synthesis model. She would be satisfied because the model is consistent with her political theory of education posited in *Democratic Education*.[28] Gutmann would be pleased by the democratic procedures used to produce either document and the emphasis, in the NSCG, that the standards are voluntary.[29] The national standards might be *one* element of informed and democratic educational decisions at the local level. However, Gutmann's "democratic authorization principle" requires that democratic institutions decide how much education is sufficient relative to

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[26]Butts, 282.

[27]Butts, 283.

[28]Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[29]Center for Civic Education, vi.

other social goods above the limit that enables political participation and conscious social reproduction. Thus, the standards or the framework would be viewed by Gutmann as one potential source in assisting citizens to make democratic educational decisions. However, Gutmann may have chosen to articulate, to a degree greater than either model, who should share in the authority of making educational decisions in a democracy.

Gutmann's democratic theory of education requires that schools provide education to a level that enables citizens to participate in democratic politics and consciously reproduce society. By conscious social reproduction Gutmann means educating toward an understanding of current culture to enable students to make informed choices about the future of society and American democracy. Both goals seem central to the synthesis model. Gutmann would agree with statements throughout both the framework and standards that illustrate the importance and primacy of political education as a goal of primary schooling.[30] While Gutmann articulated that primacy in moral terms, both the standards and the framework justify the importance of civic education in terms of its relation to the future of democracy.[31]

For Gutmann, the emphasis of schooling, as one part of a democratic education, should be on the values of democratic citizenship that will help citizens choose among various conceptions of the "good life." To this end, a democratic education is not neutral--it limits the kinds of "good lives" or "good societies" that are possible in social reproduction by educating toward democratic values.[32] Although Gutmann, like R. Freeman Butts, might emphasize the values even more, the

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[30]Gutmann, 287.

[31]Center for Civic Education, 2; NAEP, 7-8.

[32]Gutmann, 42.

synthesis framework does educate toward democratic values--it is not neutral.

The synthesis does not overtly violate Gutmann's principles of either non-discrimination--the synthesis will, at some level of competence, enable citizens to rationally deliberate and share in consciously shaping the future of society; or non-repression--the synthesis does not restrict rational deliberation of competing conceptions of the good life and good society. What's more, Gutmann would no doubt conclude that the synthesis helps in meeting the "democratic threshold principle"--the level of understanding and skill, articulated through the NAEP Civics Framework, that would enable political participation.[33] In other words, the model represents a kind of civic education that does not seem to violate any of Gutmann's democratic "checks" and is also consistent with the positive elements of her theory (e.g., focuses on political education).

Would Gutmann, then, take issue with the conception of civic education as constructed through the model? The answer is not obvious. Gutmann's theory emphasizes who should have a voice in making educational decisions and the minimum requirements of that education. The focus of her work is not in providing a personal narrative on what civic education should include. Rather, the focus is on who should decide and to what standards should those decisions be held. However, beyond emphasizing the values of democratic citizenship to a greater degree than the model suggests or more clearly articulating who should share in educational decisions, Gutmann might alter the model in at least one other way. Gutmann does stress the importance of democratic school organization--that students should be given some voice in their own education.[34] She would not support civic education by a majority vote of the student body.

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[33]Gutmann, 147.

[34]Gutmann, 88-94.

However, she does advocate giving students, among other people, a voice in making democratic educational decisions. That participation, according to Gutmann, should be a part of a properly conceived their civic education.

The Model Analyzed through the Perspective of Toni Marie Massaro

Toni Marie Massaro, constitutional law professor at the University of Arizona, might not be as pleased as Butts or Gutmann with the model for civic education as represented by both national statements on civics. Massaro in *Constitutional Literacy* argues for emphasizing America's constitutional legacy that would achieve the balance between educating toward a common political heritage and a "rich appreciation for our conflicts and differences."[35] To be sure, the synthesis emphasizes America's constitutional heritage and achieves some degree of balance between pluralism and cohesion. For example, the NSCG asks students to analyze the "conflicts among values and principles in American political and social life," or the "disparities between ideals and realities in American political and social life."[36] It is safe to assume that Massaro would criticize the synthesis for not emphasizing the constitutional conflicts inherently a part of the system and existent throughout American history.

Massaro believes that constitutional jurisprudence adequately reflects "the dilemma of our differences."[37] To this end, she would be critical of the synthesis framework for not incorporating and emphasizing constitutional law to illustrate the differences or conflicts that frame democratic

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[35]Toni Marie Massaro, *Constitutional Literacy: A Core Curriculum for a Multicultural Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 153.

[36]Center for Civic Education, 142.

[37]Massaro, 71.

deliberation. Constitutional law does not represent a major component of the synthesis framework.[38] It could be argued that the model establishes the limits Massaro seeks without using Supreme Court cases as a substantive tool--that limits are established through other means. Still, Massaro would want those limits to be the focus and not an ancillary part of an appropriately conceived civic education. Massaro, like Gutmann, is aiming toward conscious social reproduction. To achieve that reproduction, Massaro believes that students need to understand the ideological and constitutional conflicts throughout American history. The political system, and the values that frame it, allow for a great deal of citizen discretion. It is inside the boundaries of this framework that Massaro would ask students to critically deliberate as citizens.

The Model Analyzed through the Perspective of David Steiner

Perhaps due to his emphasis on historic and classic elements of civic education, David Steiner's articulation of civic education in *Rethinking Democratic Education* is generally inconsistent with the model.[39] To begin with, Steiner rejects the very idea of national education standards and is explicitly skeptical the National Standards for Civics and Government.[40] He is critical of standards because they are "specific to the nth degree" and do not allow for local autonomy.[41] At the same time, Steiner's proposed civic education program includes a "national test" to be administered to graduating seniors. To the extent that the NAEP Civics Framework

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[38]Decisions of the Supreme Court do not appear to be a focus of either document.

[39]David M. Steiner, *Rethinking Democratic Education: The Politics of Reform* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[40]Steiner, 199.

[41]Steiner, 199.

does not examine the kinds of issues or ask the kinds of questions to which Steiner subscribes, it is safe to assume he would reject the NAEP framework as well. Steiner is after a kind of citizenship that will enable the polis to be "the measure of all things."[42] The model does not emphasize or even include major elements of Steiner's proposal. To this end, it is safe to assume that Steiner would conclude that the synthesis would fall far short of this lofty goal.

Steiner's model is built around four curricular cores. The first core emphasizes the evaluation of public rhetoric. While the NSCG does provide for the evaluation of public rhetoric,[43] Steiner would surely want public rhetoric to occupy a more central place in the framework and at a higher level of sophistication. Second, while Steiner would agree with the model's emphasis on the evaluation of public policy, he would disagree with the model's means. The key to developing students' ability to judge issues of public policy, for Steiner, is through the broad study of "political economy."[44] Through political economy students would focus their attention on "the macro relationships between markets, income distribution, political ideology, technology, the family structure, and employment patterns."[45] Again, this is not an emphasis of either paradigm. The same could be said for Steiner's emphasis on the human body as an organizing center of useful civic study as well as the use of theater as an appropriate pedagogical tool to develop appropriate civic information, skills, and values.

The Model Analyzed through the Perspective of Thomas Pangle

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[42]Steiner, 198. Borrowing from Plato's Protagorus.

[43]See, for example, Center for Civic Education, 118-119.

[44]Steiner, 203-204.

[45]Steiner, 203-204.

To the extent that Thomas Pangle's construction of civic education focused on the university level in *The Ennobling of Democracy*, it is somewhat difficult to analyze the model through his perspective.[46] However, Pangle's perception of democracy and education are clear enough to provide some insight into how he might view the synthesis--even at the pre-collegiate level. At the collegiate level, Pangle seeks to raise the intellectual stakes for civic education by returning to the ancients for inspiration and guidance. He hopes to blend ancient with modern conceptions of political theory and civic education. He is not satisfied that current intellectual thought (especially postmodernism) is capable of answering questions that have concerned liberal democracies. Pangle calls for a return to the Socratic dialectic and the great works, at the collegiate level, that will enable students to think "outside the cave"--to question their surest commitments and beliefs.[47] An appropriately conceived pre-collegiate education, according to Steiner, would be spent preparing to question the values and beliefs that form one's own cave.

What, then, is appropriate preparation for study of the great works, the Socratic dialectic, and the liberating education to which Pangle subscribes? On a basic level, he would applaud the efforts to raise the standards for civic education at the pre-collegiate level. Although the model of civic education does not force students to think outside their own "cave," it does force them to critically deliberate inside "their cave." Particularly at the "advanced" level of competence as articulated by the NAEP framework,[48] students would leave high school with a fairly sophisticated

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[46]Thomas L. Pangle, *The Ennobling of Democracy: The Challenge of the Postmodern Age* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[47]Pangle, 190-191.

[48]NAEP, 48-49.

understanding of the knowledge, values, and skills associated with American citizenship.[49] One could argue that before students can question their surest commitments and beliefs at the collegiate level, they will need a solid education in what those beliefs consist. For Pangle, that is exactly what pre-college education should do--"cultivate the soil or prepare the ground in which individuals. . .can nourish true philosophic education."[50] In fact, according to Plato's Socrates it is only after one has been exposed to a "less intellectual" civic education that one can begin the quest for higher truth.[51] While Pangle would assert that other elements of a pre-collegiate education are important in preparing for the dialectic or the great works, he would not deny the value of the model.

Again, Pangle might make slight adjustments to the synthesis model. More than anything, Pangle seems to be after a rekindling of the *civic spirit*. To achieve this, at the pre-collegiate level, he would focus more attention on "the education of heart rather than the mind."[52] Pangle would stress, to a far greater degree than synthesis conception, the development of character, values, and morals associated with responsible citizenship. He would focus on values that, given the tempestuous place values have in the American curriculum generally, seem removed from current consideration by national documents like the NAEP framework or the NSCG. This is not to say that the model does not include some values or dispositions to which Pangle would readily subscribe. Pangle would place more emphasis on value, moral, and character development and

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[49]NAEP, 49.

[50]Pangle, 165.

[51]Pangle, 165.

[52]Pangle, 164.

might include some values that are implicitly or explicitly religious and are controversial among some segments of American society.[53]

The Model Analyzed through the Ends-Means Test

Having explored the potential reactions of five contemporary theorists, the national statements on civic education will be subjected to an ends-means test similar to the one employed by the Supreme Court in cases involving Equal Protection.[54] The test simply evaluates the worthiness of the goals of the model as compared to democratic values and traditions; and, to the extent it is possible, evaluates the extent to which the means chosen are appropriate vehicles to accomplish those ends.

Civic education ultimately seeks a desired end--some from of citizen. Citizenship involves a variety of considerations and few people agree on the exact requirements of good citizenship. While the exact elements of citizenship defy consensus, it is possible to evaluate the kind of citizens the model seeks on democratic grounds--the degree to which the goals of a model are consistent or inconsistent with democratic principles. The ends must be at least compatible with fundamental democratic principles, traditions, and values to enable, borrowing from Amy Gutmann, conscious social reproduction.

Overall, the model aims to develop thoughtful, responsible and humane citizens. It seeks citizens that are informed, guided by values, and able to participate in political life; citizens who

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[53]Pangle, 180. In a brief discussion of the kind of values that should be a part of a pre-collegiate civic education Pangle includes a "faith in one God whose oneness inspires and helps weld our oneness as a nation."

[54]An ends-means test is useful in an educational context for at least two reasons. First, there is a standard to which the goals of civic education may be held--democratic principles and ideas. Second, an ends-means test enables more precise scrutiny of the merits and failings educational reform by examining the relationship or "fit" between the objectives of a model and the ways that model attempts to accomplish those objectives.

are concerned with the maintenance and improvement of society; citizens able to balance the concerns for individual rights with individual and collective responsibilities; citizens capable of connecting political theory with practice; and citizens who possess intellectual and participatory skills necessary to make sound judgments about public policy and act on those judgments. Taken seriously, in the hearts and minds of capable teachers, the synthesis model of civic education aims to develop a kind of "advanced citizen" that is currently an aberration in American society.

There is little, if anything, to criticize about the ends or the aims of the consensus model. The kind of knowledge, skills, and dispositions the model seeks are fundamental to participation in American democracy in 1997. I subscribe to the kind of citizenship the consensus seeks. If the aims of the model were realized, there would be reason for great optimism concerning the future of American democracy. Perhaps democratic institutions could survive another 200 years with a modestly informed and apathetic electorate. I would rather not risk the future and aim for a kind of citizenship that is capable of tough policy decisions in a modern democracy. The hope for the future of American democracy is not in educating a few elite political leaders; the hope for the future is in the hearts and minds of concerned American citizens. It is concerned citizens, reminds Margaret Mead, who have the power to make significant changes to improve the world.[55]

Of course, simply because a model aims for a type of citizenship that seems fundamentally consistent with democratic ideals and principles, does not necessarily make it a sound model for civic education. The second prong of the test analyzes the means chosen to accomplish the ends.

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[55]See Margaret Mead, Quotations Home Page (http://www.lexmark.com/data/quote.html). "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

I say "chosen" to the extent there are multiple ways to achieve an educational end--some ways clearly superior to others. Although pedagogy is a part of the means of any educational program, the analysis that follows will not focus on pedagogy to the extent that neither of the statements, to their credit, focused on pedagogy. Analysis of the means, for purposes of the current investigation, concentrates on the curricular decisions as represented by the framework or standards. For example: To what extent are the information, skills, and dispositions consistent with the goals articulated throughout either framework? How will the information be organized? Which values or dispositions will be developed, and how? Which thinking and participatory skills will be developed, and how will they be practiced? The success or failure of an educational proposal depends, in part, on the degree to which the curriculum allows for and aims at its ends. Thus, the model needs to be analyze in terms of the fit between its means and ends.

The organizing questions that drove construction of both models relate directly to fundamental ideas associated with democracy and to the goals previously articulated. However, is the fit close enough? Do these questions emphasize the "best" information, dispositions, and skills to achieve the kind of citizenship the synthesis seems to be aiming? I might choose to emphasize, to the extent I believe that a slightly different emphasis would be more compatible with the goals, a slightly different list of questions.

First, like Toni Massaro, I would emphasize, to a greater degree than either the standards or the framework, constitutional conflict. Combining elements of Massaro's theoretical perspective with that of Freeman Butts, I would make the constitutional conflicts and the values they convey a more central part of the means. The conflicts frame the debate, highlight both *pluribus* and *unum* values, and convey a part of our constitutional heritage that is lively and challenging. A model

that asks the following questions might be more consistent with the kind of citizens to which the synthesis subscribes:

What are the boundaries of rational critical deliberation in American democracy?

1. Which values are fundamental to the American notion of democracy?
2. How have those values changed or been altered through time?
3. Who decides the boundaries in which American's may consciously contemplate the future of society and how?
4. How have American ideals conflicted with governmental practice?
5. What historical examples indicate that the will of the majority is not always consistent with democratic principles?
6. What are the limits of individual rights?
7. What are the limits of governmental authority?

A conflicts-approach to civic education breathes meaning and life into the values around which the political and civic institutions are organized. If conscious social reproduction and democratic deliberation are fundamental to democratic education and are goals of the synthesis model, then students need a clear understanding of the values and principles that frame the debate. The conflicts-approach may be superior means to achieve this end. Students would surely have a better understanding of equality, for example, if they were exposed to the debates, arguments, and conflicts that have centered on equality throughout American history. Neither the framework nor the standards clearly focus on the conflicts.

The second minor change I might suggest to either the standards or framework committee would be to place a little more emphasis on the thoughtful or concerned part of American citizenship. It does not matter how much citizens know about American constitutionalism or how well-prepared they are to participate in democratic decisions if they are not concerned or thoughtful enough to participate. What improvements might be made to the standards or the framework to emphasize thoughtful and concerned participation? Perhaps, it should include a

more intensive focus on comparative forms of government and what citizenship means under different types of regimes and in different countries. The intention would not be to applaud the "superiority" of American citizenship or democracy; rather, the focus could be on the varying roles of citizens throughout the world. By investigating what citizenship means in other countries, students would come to a greater understanding and appreciation of their own roles as citizens. Moreover, realizing that democratic society is sometimes costly, fragile, and dear to millions of people throughout the world might help students expand their own vision of citizenship and, it would be hoped, raise their concern for the future of American democracy.

I agree with the authors of the NAEP framework that ". . . knowledge and skills make possible a reasoned commitment to those fundamental values and principles essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy."[56] However, that commitment may be made stronger if students were allowed to question and critically examine those fundamental values. While it is true that the vast majority of high school students are incapable of the kind of liberating education Pangle describes, most are also capable of critical examination beyond what is contained in the model. In a civics curriculum, this would mean taking seriously the some of the pre-scientific questions that, according to Pangle, are critical to a truly liberating education.[57] Exploring the answers to pre-scientific questions (e.g., what is a good society?) would assist in harnessing the "youthful idealism" the standards mention important to civic education.[58] This kind of civic education might increase the *reasoned* part of a "reasoned

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[56]NAEP, 7.

[57]Pangle, 164-165.

[58]Center for Civic Education, vi.

commitment" to American values and principles.

Beyond these minor changes in emphasis or focus, I can offer few suggestions for improving the means chosen to accomplish fundamental civic ends. To borrow terminology from the United States Supreme Court, the ends are fundamental to democratic principles and the means are at least "closely tailored" to those fundamental ends. For an issue as important as citizenship, Americans need to continue to scrutinize both the means and the ends of civic education.

Conclusion

Upon close and critical examination, the NAEP Civics Framework and the NSCG seem, on the whole, representative of ideas and concerns of many civic education theorists. Individually, each theorist might emphasize some aspect of citizenship to a greater degree than did the NSCG or the NAEP framework. However, as national statements, it is remarkable how much the theorists would agree with each document. At least for this particular moment in American history, the framework and standards appear to be leading civic education, and therefore society, in desirable and democratic directions. While, as Amy Gutmann would point out, it is up to local school districts to construct their own curricular proposals for civic education, the national statements on civic education will greatly contribute to an education for democracy. The education of citizens must not be taken for granted or assumed. The school's role in helping to foster responsible and humane citizenship is too important to be left to chance. Perhaps the importance of civic education and citizenship in a democracy was appropriately articulated by a

humble citizen who said, "The salvation of the state is watchfulness in its citizens."[59]

[59]Hartley Burr Alexander was a professor of history at the University of Nebraska and a "citizen consultant" during the construction of the Nebraska State Capital during the 1920s. Alexander recommended quotes from various political thinkers to adorn all parts of the capital building, except the main entrance. The words above the main entrance were his own--those of a citizen. Symbolizing that the words of a citizen, in a democracy, are equal to those of the greatest political thinkers of all time.

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